The Field Education Office takes responsibility for making assignments to field practicum settings. Assignments are made in consultation with prospective Field Instructors.

Students requesting a foundation placement are required to submit the Foundation Planning Guide online to the Field Education Office. Referrals to placements are made after an interview with a member of the field faculty and consideration of work and educational background, interests, and availability of field placement agencies.

Students requesting a concentration placement are requested to complete and submit the Concentration Planning Guide online to the Field Education Office. Concentration students are referred to placements with different agencies and supervisors than they had during their first year. Student matches are made with consideration for the type of learning experience and supervision need.

During the Concentration matching process it is possible that more than one student is interested in the same field placement. After exploring the possibility of the field setting accepting more than one student, the Field Education Office will use the following principles (in no particular order) in determining which student will be placed at the field site: how closely the student’s second choice would meet their learning goals; how well the proposed Field Instructor’s and student’s learning/teaching styles match; the agency expectations (skill level, professional experience, age, maturity of the student, requirements for languages other than English, etc.), how well the placement fits with the career goals of the student; the strength of the student’s foundation placement; duplication of prior employment or foundation field placement experiences; and, special needs of the student such as health or disability. The Field Office does not consider travel distance to field sites or financial need in these decisions.

If a placement becomes unavailable between the time the student submits their agency preferences and the time field matches are announced, the student will be notified that one of their three preferences is no longer available and will be asked to choose another option in its place.

Every effort will be made to assure that each student has experience with a variety of populations, opportunity to develop a range of skills and roles, and exposure to different settings.

At the point of referral, the Field Education Office will send the agency a contact form via email and instructions on how to access the student’s planning guide online. At the same time the student will receive a referral form via email. This referral form will instruct the student to contact the potential Field Instructor to schedule an interview to assess the appropriateness of the match.

After the placement interview, the student and Field Instructor are requested to advise the Field Education Office of the outcome by submitting their respective Confirmation Form online. If after the interview the student decides that he/she is concerned about the match, the student should contact the Field Office immediately to discuss their interview experience and their rationale for wanting to decline the match. If the field instructor decides to decline the match, he/she should contact the Field Education Director immediately.
Students are required to successfully interview and be officially accepted by the field placement agency and field instructor/task supervisor. Occasionally, a student is not accepted for placement after the initial interview because the field instructor/task supervisor thinks that the student is not appropriate professionally. If a student is not accepted for a field placement after two different interviews for reasons of professional inappropriateness, the student will not be allowed to interview at another field setting until a meeting occurs between the student, the field advisor, the field director and the Associate Dean. The purpose of the meeting will be to assess and address the problem(s) and assist the student in correcting them. On occasion, the student may be referred to the Committee on Students.

Once a student has made a commitment to an agency it is expected that he/she will complete their field placement in that agency. However, if at any point during the process, the student determines that he/she will not be going to a field placement as planned, or is not a good match for the agency, he/she is expected to contact the Field Education Office. Once this has been discussed with and agreed upon by the Field Education faculty and notify the agency to which the referral was made. This must be completed before a referral to another agency can be pursued by the Field Office.

All students must complete the following requirements prior to being admitted into the Field Education Program:

- Successful admission into the University of North Carolina, School of Social Work;
- Completion of a Safety in Field Education Course (currently two options for completion);
- Completion of Jumpstart! Program, including field orientation;
- Completion of criminal background check and other required paperwork of the agency (as applicable);
- Signed Student Statement of Understanding (completed prior to beginning field placement).